



DHS Matters!

Michigan Department of Human Services • Lansing, Michigan • January 3, 2007

Produced by DHS Office of Communications, Suite 1510, Grand Tower, Lansing

Submit stories by e-mail to DHS-Newsletter@michigan.gov



McCree District staff and others with award (staff left to right): Sheryl Thompson, Genesee DHS director; Cathy Merriman, FIM; Lorraine McCune, ES; Tim English, U.S. Food and Nutrition Service; Taquila Johnson, ES; Barbara Anders, McCree District manager; Vicki Greene, ES; Angie Jenerette, DHS Food Assistance Program accuracy administrator.

Genesee McCree District receives federal award

Earns 2006 food stamp hunger champion – honorable mentor award

From Barbara Anders, Manager

Genesee County McCree District, Flint

AndersB@michigan.gov

The Genesee County McCree District earned a federal award for assisting county residents with their nutrition needs. They received the award at an appropriate time – a week before Thanksgiving.

Tim English from the U.S. Food & Nutrition Service made a special trip to Flint Nov. 17 to present the **2006 Food Stamp Hunger Champion Honorable Mentor** award to the staff at McCree District. The McCree District was the only office in the Midwest region to receive this award.

The McCree District Office in Genesee County was nominated by Elder Law of Michigan, Inc. for their role in MI-Café, an outreach initiative targeting seniors in Michigan. Through MI-Café, seniors are able to apply for Food Assistance Program benefits through their local senior center.

The applications are then forwarded to the McCree office and processed by one of three assigned eligibility specialists. This process is much more user-friendly for the senior population as they are able to apply in a familiar setting.

In 2004, the Food Stamp Outreach Coalition introduced an annual recognition program called the Food Stamp Hunger Champions Program. This was established to honor local offices that provide exemplary service in assisting eligible clients in obtaining food assistance. The McCree District award is from this program.

The office was rewarded with both a certificate and plaque in recognition of their hard work. The staff was treated to cake to celebrate and the plaque is hanging in the main hall of the office for all staff to see!

Click to read...

Local office stories.....2-4

Your letters.....4



Participants in the DDS Toys for Tots campaign (left to right): Front row: **Colleen Burton, Kris Abbey, Dr. Linda Brundage, Fran Norton and Barbara Begian**. Second row: **Barbara Kirkland, Linda Rademacher, Tammy Nguyen, Patrick Garlitz and Randi Bell**. Third row: **Rose Ignash, Sue Tice, Mary Peters, Nikki Dunn and Scott Chambers**. Back Row: **Mark Black, Penny Gardner, Stacy Turk, Paula Pendergast, Cindy Wexler, Ann Marie Eggert and Dr. Rom Kriauciunas**.

DDS donates more than \$3,000 to charity for holidays

From Lural Baltimore

Disability Determination Service, Lansing

BaltimoreL@michigan.gov

We shared holiday happiness again this year with the Toys for Tots and Salvation Army programs thanks to the hard work and generosity of DHS Disability Determination Service central office.

This year the Lansing office held their 36th annual crafts, food, white elephant, sloppy Jo and soup luncheon sales. The planning started early to include a sloppy Jo lunch at the first sale and a homemade soup lunch at the second sale. We collected a grand total of \$3,164.69 from sales and lunches.

Every year in November and December the DDS Lansing office has two bake and craft sales. Over the years this has become a combined effort by the entire office. Many volunteers are needed for setup, room attendance, cleanup and organizing.

The Michigan Association of Disability Examiners provides the paper products for the sale. Even some of our retirees return with donations of food and gift items to sell each year. This year there were homemade breads and cookies, quilts, holiday decorations, wood burned art, knitted and crocheted projects, quiches and breakfast items for both sales.

Special thanks go to DDS employees and management with special donations from District C and the DHS Coffee Fund. Quality assurance, the Bakers, the Soup & Sloppy Jo Makers and Craft Elves, buyers and everyone who helped make this all possible. Donations were also made in memory of Dr. Schroeder, medical consultant for DDS, and **Char Hesse**, disability examiner for DDS, to both the Toys for Tots Program and the Salvation Army Program.

■ Part of the DHS Adult & Family Services Administration, the DDS works with the Social Security Administration to determine eligibility for benefits under the federal SSI and Social Security Disability Insurance Programs. DDS also processes claims for the State Disability Assistance and Medicaid programs.



Kent County DHS knitting divas and associates with their gifts (from left) **Patricia Dickerson, Linda Wolthuis, Linda Stutting, Carrie Pebley, Linda Broome, Donna Smith, Edna Albert, Trisha Toronto, Steve Wilson, Emily Langenau and Kelli Arrendondo.** Not pictured: **Pat Wonders and Julie Mulder.**

Kent County “knitting divas” work for area’s needy children

From Shelly Guinn
CPS/Family to Family
Kent County DHS, Grand Rapids
GuinnS@michigan.gov

The “Knitting Divas” of Kent County DHS – **Kelli Arrendondo, Linda Wolthuis, Micki White, Linda Broome and Linda Stutting** – began meeting at break time about one year ago to knit and share their expertise. After a large amount of yarn was accumulated, the “divas” decided that they should share their knitting items with needy children.

A challenge was given to all workers at the Kent County DHS Cascade office to make hats, mittens and/or scarves by Dec. 1, 2006 and donate them to a shelter. In an effort to encourage those less “crafty”, we offered a Knitting 101 class during a lunch hour.

Although a few initially struggled with the techniques, they came through in the end. During the final week of accepting donations the “divas” opened the challenge to any handmade and/or bought hats, scarves, or mittens. As seen above, there was an overwhelming response to the challenge.

We donated the items to a Kent County domestic violence shelter and a Kent County homeless shelter Dec. 5 where the items were accepted with much appreciation. Thank you to all who participated and helped those families in need.



The DHS Office of Children and Adult Licensing staff on W. Saginaw in Lansing were delighted to sponsor a family through Relief After Violent Encounter, Inc. (RAVE), a domestic violence provider that serves Clinton and Shiawassee Counties, this holiday season. Their generosity made a world of difference to a family that is coping with the after affects of a violent encounter and the day-to-day struggles to make a new life. **DeAnna Clark, Jennifer Weikel-Ockert, Denise Kennedy and Gloria Hackett** (pictured above left to right) organized the collection and wrapped the gifts along with the aid of their little elf Kim Peiffer-Walstrom.

– from **DeAnna Clark**

DDS employee wins quarterly State Employee Blood Challenge award

From Linda Barar, Vice President of Corporate Relations
Michigan Community Blood Centers
Grand Rapids

Trajun Dalm just wants to give back. His health deteriorated after three close family members died within one year. He promised himself that once his own health improved, he would start doing more. He kept his promise – and started donating blood for the first time during the State Employee Blood Challenge.



Kathy Mistele and Trajun Dalm

Staff from Michigan Community Blood Centers presented him with an award certificate in an informal ceremony Dec. 5 at the Disability Determination Service offices in Traverse City, where he works.

As the fourth quarter drawing winner for the State Employee Blood Challenge, Dalm's efforts have been rewarded with a two-night stay in a jacuzzi or hot tub room at the Park House Inn Bed and Breakfast in Saugatuck.

"That is great!" Dalm said. He describes donating blood as an easy and rewarding way to give back to his community. "It takes very little time and effort and is a positive thing," he said.

Also present at the ceremony was **Kathy Mistele**, Dalm's manager. Donation efforts are coordinated by **Jane Mullins**, chairperson for the Disability Determination Service blood drives in Traverse City.

■ For more on State Employees Blood Challenge go to www.michigan.gov/bloodchallenge

Date: Dec. 15
To: Mary Chaliman, Foster Care Program Manager
DHS, Lansing
Subj: Mary Somma

I wanted to take this opportunity to let you know how helpful Mary Somma has been. I am responsible for training private agency foster care staff. As you are aware, there are multiple discrepancies within policy, the SDM templates and the SWSS-FAJ system. Ms. Somma always responds to my questions immediately. When she doesn't know the answer she directs me to the appropriate person to ask.

Further, she has gone above and beyond by assisting private agency staff in having access to forms that are not currently available on-line. I just wanted to share with you how helpful Ms. Somma is and how much she advocates for staff in the field so that they can better protect children and families.

Michelle M. White, MSW
Foster Care Trainer/Consultant
DHS Child Welfare Institute
Saginaw

Date: Nov. 16
To: Darlene Redd, Family Independence Specialist
DHS Oakland County – Saginaw St. District, Pontiac
Subj: Thanks

Too often we hear the complaints and not the appreciation of someone's kindness and support. I'm writing to you to thank you as my caseworker for the past year. You have been a tremendous support in ways you don't know. You may say you were just doing your job but to me you went beyond. Other agencies in Pontiac who should be a supporter were not. I called you often to ask questions and your patience, kindness and understanding showed through. As my case may be closing soon, I felt strongly in writing to say thank you.

Gloria Smith
Lake Orion

Your letters,
intercepted
and otherwise

DHS Matters! is a product of Michigan's Department of Human Services
Marianne Udow, Director • Karen Stock, Director, Office of Communications
Larry VanDeSande, editor • Submit stories by e-mail to: DHS-Newsletter@michigan.gov